

Message from the Chair

Continuity of Care; The Pharmacist's Role

Dear Colleagues,



Continuity of care has gathered much momentum in healthcare over the last few years. Our section had a task force on continuity of care that successfully completed an ASHP Report titled "Continuity of Care in Medication Therapy Management" in August 2005. ASHP members from each Section and from inpatient, clinic, home care, outpatient, and long term care practice sites reviewed the various issues that challenge us each day in providing continuity of care for our patients in light of all the challenges we deal with daily. They proposed a data set of clinical information that would support pharmacists in managing our patient's medication needs and developed a call to action that would help guide future activities for the profession as we interface with the health care system and our interdisciplinary peers. Our executive committee has kept this report in the forefront as we strive to support you in the programs we develop.

Since this report was published the industry has seen a more intense focus on the critical need to provide this continuity of care, and we as pharmacists, the medication experts, are finding ourselves in the center of the demands of leading the efforts to provide continuity in the medication aspect of patient care. Medication reconciliation requirements by the JCAHO and the impact of Part D have further elevated provider and consumer awareness of the challenges faced by patients as they pass through the currently fragmented health care system.

Thank you to you all! Our section has been able to serve as collecting point of information to shape ideas and goals for ASHP as we support the overall effort of keeping pharmacists recognized as a key participant in the national discussion on continuity of care. Having representation of members from all practice sites brings the issues to the forefront. Your input is critical to help ensure that we maintain this focus in the continuing improvement of patient care and patient outcomes.

For those who are attending the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting in Anaheim, the section's programming committee has organized a number of exciting educational sessions highlighting the challenges and role of the pharmacist in continuity of care. There will be a 5 hour session that will start with an overview of issues that will be

followed by a sequential case study of a patient as they enter the health care system and travel through the ED to long term care, home care, or ambulatory self-care. There are also two 2 hour sessions, one focusing on nutrition and the other on pain management, that highlight important patient issues as they change levels of care. These programs will provide a great experience for us to learn about the various issues dealt with by our peers in different settings as they strive to provide continuity of care. For more information about these and other sessions planned in cooperation with the Section, visit the Midyear Clinical Meeting website at <http://www.ashp.org/meetings/midyear/>.

I look forward to seeing everyone in Anaheim! In the meantime, have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,

Cathy L. Sasser, R.Ph.

Chair, Section of Home, Ambulatory, and Chronic Care Practitioners (2006-2007)

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